

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 (ISO) R

66011

DRAFTED BY:USOAS:REWHITE:MM

APPROVED BY:ARA:WDROGERS

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P 242317Z JAN 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017936

FOR AMB MAILLARD

FOL RPT STATE 017936 ACTION PANAMA INFO MANAGUA 24 JAN QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017936

PANAMA FROM ROGERS FOR AMBASSADOR JORDEN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, OAS

SUBJECT: PANAMA REPRESENTATIVE ATTACKS U.S. ON CANAL
PROBLEM

MANAGUA FOR AMB. MAILLARD

1. IN THE OAS PERMANENT COUNCIL MEETING OF JANUARY 23,
AMBASSADOR PITY OF PANAMA ATTACKED THE UNITED STATES ON
THE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE.

2. IN A BITTER TIRADE WITH QUOTES FROM "OFFICIAL GOP
SOURCES" PITY CHARACTERIZED US POLICY WITH PHRASES SUCH
AS: "A POLICY OF STRANGULATION, "IMPERIALISM",
"PATERNALISM", "COLONIALISM", AND "OPPRESSION". HE
DESCRIBED THE ROLE OF THE PANAMANIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO
THE OAS AS ONE OF "DESTRUCTION OF A POLICY OF ARROGANCE"
OF THE UNITED STATES.

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3. DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE WHITE RESPONDED STATING THAT AMBASSADOR PITY HAS MISUSED THIS FORUM TO LAUNCH ANOTHER ATTACK ON THE U.S. HE SAID IT WAS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF PANAMA - A COUNTRY FOR WHICH THE US HAS THE HIGHEST REGARD - WOULD CHARACTERIZE THE U.S. IN SUCH A FASHION. WHITE POINTED OUT THAT DIPLOMATS WHO REPRESENT THE UNITED STATES MUST CONSTANTLY STRIVE TO INSURE THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE AND IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER AND WITH THE PROPER RESPECT FOR OTHER DELEGATES AND ADDED THAT AMBASSADOR PITY APPARENTLY IS UNDER NO SUCH RESTRICTIONS. WHITE STATED THAT THE PANAMA CANAL IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR HISTORY AND THE NEGOTIATION OF A NEW TREATY IS BOUND TO CAUSE PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND CONTROVERSY. HE CITED SOME MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE CANAL AND QUOTED RELEVANT PORTIONS OF AMBASSADOR BUNKER'S PORTLAND, OREGON SPEECH TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE USG IS CONSCIENTIOUSLY TRYING TO GET THE FACTS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE US REGARDING THE CANAL AND THE ZONE. WHITE SAID THAT TO MAKE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES AT A TIME WHEN PANAMA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE REACHING FOR THE LAST STAGES OF A TREATY IS IRRESPONSIBLE. HE CLOSED WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT IF THE US AND PANAMA ARE SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING A TREATY IT WILL BE IN SPITE OF SPEECHES SUCH AS THAT GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR PITY AND NOT BECAUSE OF THEM.

4. PREDICTABLY PITY RESPONDED BY DESCRIBING RESPONSE AS "IGNORANT" AND "BLACKMAIL". WHITE REPLIED STATING THAT HE HAD DELIVERED A MEASURED STATEMENT DESIGNED TO DISPELL FALSE IMPRESSIONS GIVEN BY PITY. HE SAID THERE WAS NOT THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF "BLACKMAIL" IN THE STATEMENT AND THAT A READING OF THE RECORD WOULD BEAR THIS OUT.

COMMENT: THIS REINFORCES MY BELIEF EXPRESSED TO YOU PREVIOUSLY THAT YOU SHOULD TALK TO TORRIJOS ABOUT THE IMPROPER CONDUCT OF AMBASSADOR PITY. MOREY HAS STATED THAT AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND HE WILL REINFORCE THIS WHEN THEY ARRIVE IN EARLY FEBRUARY. WE SUGGEST, UNLES, YOU

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PERCEIVE SOME BETTER COURSE, THAT YOU FORMALLY REQUEST TO BE ADVISED WHETHER PITY'S CHARACTERIZATION OF OUR POLICY AS ONE OF "STRANGULATION", "IMPERIALISM" AND "COLONIALISM" AND "OPPRESSION" IS THE OFFICIAL CHARACTERIZATION OF OUR POLICY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA AT THIS TIME AND WHETHER PANAMA BELIEVES THAT THE ROLE OF ITS REPRESENTATIVE IN THE OAS, OR ITS REPRESENTATIVES ELSEWHERE, IS THE "DESTRUCTION OF A POLICY OF ARROGANCE".

IF THIS IS A CORRECT STATEMENT OF PAAMA'S OFFICIAL POLICY, AT THIS TIME, FOLLOWING SUCH A LONG, ARDUOUS AND GOOD FAITH EFFORT ON OUR PART TO NEGOTIATE A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH PANAMA BASED ON THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES, THEN WE HAVE SOME RETHINKING TO DO.

5. BELL HAS ALREADY INFORMED GONZALEZ-REVILLA OF OUR "SHOCK" AT PITY'S LANGUAGE AND POSTURE AND ASKED HIM TO FIND OUT WHETHER PITY SPOKE AUTHORITATIVELY FOR PANAMA. IN THE EVENT HE DID SO, THEN THE US WOULD HAVE TO GIVE MORE THOUGHT TO "PARTNERSHIP" AS IT IS BEING STRUCTURED RIGHT NOW BETWEEN TWO NEGOTIATING TEAMS.

6. GONZALEZ-REVILLA REPLIED THAT WHILE HE COULD PROMISE NOTHING, HE WOULD BE RECOMMENDING TO TORRIJOS THAT PITY BE "REPROGRAMMED" (APPARENTLY PITY IS ON HIS WAY TO PANAMA NOW, VIA A STOPOVER IN SAN SALVADOR AND GONZALEZ-REVILLA SEES "THIS AS AN APPROPRIATE MOMENT TO TRY FOR "REPROGRAMMING"). SISCO UNQUOTE
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, CANALS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE017936
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: USOAS:REWHITE:MM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760028-0968
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760125/aaaaavmb.tel
Line Count: 135
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2004 by saccheem>; APPROVED <21 OCT 2004 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PANAMA REPRESENTATIVE ATTACKS U.S. ON CANAL PROBLEM
TAGS: PFOR, PN, US, PQ, OAS, (PITTY)
To: SAN SALVADOR
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006